Mrs Frances J. Mears

Memorials

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Mrs. Frances Jane Mears,

Died March 26th, 1879, ... at Worcester, Mass.

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MEMORIAL TRIBUTES.

REMARKS OF REV. DRS. CUTLER AND CADY

On the occasion of the funeral, March 28th, 1879.

Discourse delivered in Piedmont Church

BY REV. D. O. MEARS,

APRIL 6TH, 1879.

OBITUARY NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

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By the request of PIEDMONT CHURCH these memorials have taken this permanent form. The words of the Rev. Doctors Cutler and Cady were public already,— tributes to a pastor's faithful wife. The sermon has been coined in the mint of sorrow. No inspiration was found in the home, which has seemed only desolation since she left it.

From one point of view the mourner's grief is silent. Yet when the storm has its rainbow, when the Gospel of Christ asserts its own sustaining power, when death gives way before the believer's victory, we stand upon another side. It is from this view that solace comes. Nothing save the unspeakable triumph of the Gospel hope "even unto the end" has given the sermon; and no request save from those who loved her so truly, could have been heeded in this more open expression.

The many words of kind remembrance, sent from the scene of her first labors, and from others who have known her well, bear witness to the quiet, gentle, unobtrusive life, which "like a tree planted by the rivers of water" has budded and blossomed, and borne its ripened fruit upon branches whose blessed leaves shall never wither.

WORCESTER, MASS., April 10, 1879.

REMARKS OF REV. E. CUTLER, D .D.

(At the public services held at the home and in the Piedmont Church, Worcester, March 28th, 1879, the consolations of the Scriptures, of prayer and of praise were imparted under the tender ministrations of the Rev. G. H. Gould, D.D., Rev. G. W. Phillips, Rev. L. B. Voorhees, and the Choir.
Aside from these the Rev. E. Cutler, D. D., spoke as follows :)

This is a very common scene. A funeral service is one with which we are all familiar. Yet the occasion of it is always sad. The death of the young is peculiarly sad. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." When the aged die, it seems more in the order of nature; it is more in accordance with our expectations; they seem to us to have accomplished their work, to have fulfilled their mission upon the earth, and to have become prepared by their infirmities to lay down the burdens of life and enter

upon their rest. It is not so when one dies in childhood, or in youth, or in the prime of life. Then it seems as if the laws of nature had been reversed, our expectations are disappointed, our hopes are blighted, and our hearts are made to feel desolation which seems impossible to be relieved; we seem to be weakened in reference to the things that are devolved upon us, as if some strong hand had been removed from the burden we were trying to carry. But if we could see all things as God sees them, perhaps even the death of the young would not be very sad; perhaps the death of the righteous would not seem sad at all.

If only in the sight of God and in accordance with his purpose, one's work is done, what remains but that he should enter upon his reward? "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." They may have been prepared in various

ways, unknown to themselves, however apparent to all with whom they were acquainted. We have sometimes noticed sure indications that where an early death had been decreed, grace had been permitted to perform its work whilst the subject himself was unconscious of the near approach of death ; he might be in health, might seem to have the prospect of a long life, yet the growing spiritual mindedness, the pleasant thoughts of heaven, the devotion to the religious duties of this life, could be looked back upon as evidences that the Lord is faithful to his promise and that He gives grace to the believing to to be prepared to die at the summons. Sometimes he prepares them by the chastening of his hand. We pass through afflictions and are made better or worse on account of them ; we are made better if we are made more Christ-like. He who was afflicted in all our afflictions, and carried our sorrows in his own bosom, is able to sanctify affliction to all who feel it, and to strengthen them as the angels strengthened Him when He was in Gethsemane.

Sometimes when one is early called to depart this life, who has had experience of this grace preparing him for the early departure, he is permitted to experience some very unusual and entrancing views of the future world. We may not call it superstition, we may not call it imagination; when such a vision comes, it is involuntary beyond a doubt. It comes because it is given; it is given, doubtless, by the occasion — the heart yearning heavenwards, so that the mind is brought into that sublime state in which it is peculiarly fitted, and fitted as it never was before, for the perception of purely spiritual things. And when the testimony of such is given, it is given not to be recorded; not to be reported to see what others will think of it; but as the spontaneous utterance of the heart. It is a precious legacy to all surviving friends, and should be to all acquaintances.

We read in the gospel that the rich man desired Abraham to send a messenger from the dead to bear testimony, to his five breth-

ren yet living, concerning the things which are to come, but was answered that the living have Moses and the prophets, and if they hear not them, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. The testimony of the dying believer in Christ, especially when it is connected with such visions of the glorious future, is the very nearest we can come to the testimony desired by the rich man in the parable, or history, as it may be, for it comes from one who is just upon the horizon between time and eternity; between faith and vision; between hope and its fruition, and at the moment when there can be no intention to deceive; coming spontaneous as the breath we draw. But this is surpassed by divine revelation.

This affliction which has befallen you, my friends, is not altogether a private one; it is of a public nature; it affects you all. One is taken from you on whom you had hoped to lean; whose counsel you had expected to enjoy; whom you had expected

to go in and out among you, with her husband, performing the duties of her station, aiding him to promote the work of the Gospel in your church. Now all your hopes, in this respect, are blighted; and you should be reminded by this disappointment, that possibly your minds and hearts have been set on things earthly more than they ought to be; especially should you be reminded of this in connection with your work in promoting the material success of your church; so that hereafter you may connect this secular part of the enterprise more intimately with the great spiritual ends for which it is designed, and for which you ought always to be laboring by means of these secular things.

Take up the labor, therefore, that devolves upon you, looking upward for guidance and aid, and praying that, whatsoever success may attend your efforts in this world, the kingdom of God may be established in your hearts; for material success is but a spiritual failure unless when you come to the

close of life you are prepared to leave all behind, in the blessed assurance that there is a crown of life laid up for you which the Righteous Judge will give you at his appearing.

This affliction falls upon a narrower circle, however, who feel it as none others can feel it. There is but one who can enter into perfect sympathy with them; and that one is He who sits at the right hand of the throne of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. As our Great High Priest, He is situated so that He can make his sympathy for us a real support, and by his Spirit be our comforter in our distress, and thus help us bear the discipline of the overruling Hand, with that resignation which proves we are born of God.

This occasion furnishes a special lesson to this church and people. It means, my friends, that the affliction is sent to your pastor to prepare him to sympathize the better with you and to do you good, not only as hearers of the gospel and co-workers with him for the promotion of the cause of Christ,

but especially in your sicknesses and afflictions, and, when you come especially to that trying hour when you will look back over the past life, and forward to its recompense. It means that the experience which has been passed through by the deceased, is coming to every one of you, sooner or later. Nevertheless, let this not be a grief; for all chastening is intended by the Almighty to be profitable, and the chastening of the present, if borne with true resignation, becomes the joy of the future. For "no chastening seemeth for the present to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

God can save by many or by few. He values the things of this world at a very different estimate from that which we put upon them. He is the efficient cause for every effect; we are but secondary causes in his hand. The work we do here is not so needful in itself for the progress of his kingdom in the world as it is for our own

personal good. When one is removed, therefore, the surviving are not to sit down in despair, but to continue steadfast in faith and well-doing.

This occasion should remind you further, that even in the prime of life there is no security against death. You who are in health and in the vigor of life, prosecuting its interests with hopes of success, are doubtless accustomed to put away the thought of death as unwelcome; but let it not be unwelcome; accustom your minds rather to be familiar with it, not as a thing of gloom, or a thing to be deprecated, but as the occasion by which you simply put off the burden here, and go to your rest, and the enjoyment of all you have believed, and all you have hoped.

The thought is familiar, that we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth; so familiar that we do not heed it as we ought. But this occasion calls upon you to beware of indifference. Let not the health of to-day, let not the vigor of the present hour, let not

the position in life which you now occupy, make you forget the liability to hear the summons of the Son of Man on any day, or any hour.

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set;—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!"

Whilst we remember this, let us remember Him on whom we lean, in whom we trust for the forgiveness of our sins, and the salvation of our souls. Though He passed through agony in view of his death, it was not because of death simply, but rather because of the sins of the world which made his death necessary to atone for them. Nor was it an unmixed evil for Him, for through death He entered into his glory. And He gained the victory over death and the grave for all who will follow him as "the captain of salvation." He has gone to prepare a place for us, and sent his Spirit to prepare us for the place, and when the two-fold preparation has been made, He will come again

and receive us to himself, that we may be with Him where He is.

Our friend, the deceased, has passed on before us; we are to follow, and blessed it will be if the summons find us prepared to follow with joy and with assurance. The separation will not be long; and when we shall stand in the presence of the Saviour and those of our loved ones whom He has taken to himself in advance of us, and be permitted to look back upon this time of separation, we shall have a very different estimate of the trials through which we are now passing. We shall find occasion to bless the hand which lifted the rod upon us, because we shall be able to see how needful was the chastening, to perfect the servant in the likeness of his Lord.

The consolation of the apostle, "That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with those things which shall be revealed in us," it is our privilege to appropriate. So shall we be comforted in regard to the deceased, strengthened to endure

the trials which are appointed for us, and assured with respect to our own future state. When the clouds intervene and the heart seems desolate, faith discerns through the promise the certain glory beyond. In view of these great objects of faith, our mourning to-day may well be mingled with spiritual joy.

REMARKS OF REV. D. R. CADY, D. D.

OF WESTBOROUGH.

As I look upon this quiet form, this face placid in the sleep of death, my thoughts run back to the time when I first looked upon her.

Nearly twelve years ago, a young man who was sitting at the feet of the now sainted Kirk, came for ordination and installation to one of the churches of Cambridge, adjoining my own. He was in the freshness and fulness of his young manhood, his heart all aglow with the lessons he had received from the lips of his revered teacher, and burning with love for the salvation of men. And there came with him, on the day when he sought, at our hands, ordination, a fair young girl, fresh from the tender care of a christian home, and from the loving nurture

of a mother, upon whose heart had early fallen the blight of widowhood. She, too, came in the joy of her young life, just crowned with the diadem of wife-hood, and stood by the side of her chosen one, ready to take upon herself also, the duties which God in his providence laid upon her.

In those sacred services, she was not merely a looker-on; she was, in her heart, also a participant; in her own spirit she received with him the solemn charge which laid upon them both the care of souls; she, in spirit, united with him in that consecration of heart and life to the service of the Master to which they were both called. The chrism of that holy anointing fell upon those two hearts, and their united life was consecrated, then and there, to Christ.

For ten years it was my privilege to see her often, and familiarly, in her home, in the relations of wife and mother, and in the more public relationship which she accepted with her husband; and it is a grateful task to stand here to-day to testify my knowledge of her fidelity and worth.

For years she was hindered in work by feeble health. She bore the pressure of sickness. A crown of suffering, almost of martyrdom, she wore; but she wore it meekly, resignedly, patiently, willing that God's purposes should be accomplished in her and through her. Retiring in her nature, instinctively avoiding all strife — the strife of tongues and clamor of parties — she found in her home her chosen sphere, and that empire in which she ruled by the all conquering power of love.

The heart of her husband trusted in her, and was never disappointed; and their married life was one of beauty and joy. But God in his providence has severed these ties. This life, my friends, and the circumstances of this death, impress upon us deeply these two thoughts: the silent power of a christian heart, and a christian life; and the wonderful grace of God to a believing soul.

Nature works noiselessly. The breath of spring breathes over the earth and dissolves the icy rigors of winter, and clothes the valleys

and the hill-sides with verdure, noiselessly. Attraction keeps the worlds moving in their stupendous circuits, silently. And so the laws of divine grace work without tumult and without noise.

Here was one working quietly, silently, in the relations of wife, mother, friend. Among the poor, in the daily unobtrusive duties which came to her, by silent christian influence, she exercised a power for good, in her household, in social circles, in all the connections which she bore in life. That power was almost unobserved by those who looked upon her; so still, and silent, and beautiful was it. Let this impress upon our minds the power of christian character and of christian life.

But, my friends, there is one other truth that comes upon us with special force to-day: that is, the wonderful grace of God to a humble, believing soul. Here was one who had not yet reached middle life; one surrounded by troops of friends; one to whom life looked beautiful; one who had a pleasant

home and attractive social surroundings; one with a husband and a child to love; one with almost everything, which earth can give, to live for; and yet the grace of God came to her and made her willing, nay, joyful, to leave all these and enter trustingly, lovingly, upon the unseen realities of the future world.

Nay more, here was a timid, shrinking woman, to whom the thought of death through all her life had been a terror, and yet the grace of God came to her in her last days and enabled her to triumph over doubt, over fear, over the last great enemy himself. Why, friends, for thirty-six hours the feet of this timid, shrinking woman, trod the dark valley of the shadow of death with the firm, proud step of a conqueror. Before she was taken away her lips were filled with songs of rejoicing. Christ, her Savior, had conquered death, and had led captivity captive. So in the last hour He gives grace to his disciples, to enable them, through Him and in Him, to triumph over death.

Dear friends, to very few is it given to have

the consolation, the triumph and testimony of the power of Christ's truth and love, in the last hour, which is given you to-day.

Those last hours; how full, they were of rejoicing! It was not a dark chamber — that of death — it was a chamber bright with the presence of Christ. It was not full of gloom and sadness; it was full of rejoicing, of joy in Christ.

I wish it were in my power to present to you what lies in my mind; the contrast of that which the world could see and that which really took place; the contrast is as broad as that between earth and heaven.

In that chamber the husband and wife, and little son were alone together. For nearly twelve years the lives of the father and mother had moved on harmoniously and lovingly as one; but now they had come to the last earthly interview; they had come to the place of parting; their earthly hopes were all overthrown; their worldly plans were frustrated; this was to the husband and wife, in their united life, the last of earth. One

of them was, in a few hours, to bid adieu to all the scenes of this world; the light of love in her eyes was to go out in darkness; the tones of her voice, tremulous with the weakness of death, were to be hushed; she was soon to lie down in the grave and the clods to cover her; and the husband was to go out to his pilgrimage alone, only leading by the hand his little boy. All this they both well knew.

Can human philosophy make brightness there? Can any reason of ours bring radiance into such a chamber as that? Must it not have been a place of unutterable sorrow, of a darkness which could be felt?

They sat in the presence of the open grave, under the shadow of the funeral cypress. And yet — here is the grace of our God, here is the love of our Christ — these last interviews were blissful interviews. As the shadows of that last evening gathered around her home, this dying wife said: "Now one more sweet talk together;" and never in the days of early college romance, when their sky was unflecked

even by a cloud, were their hearts so full of peace and hope, and trust, as then. Not on the glad day of their espousals did they talk so tenderly and so lovingly of the future. But, friends, they did not sit in the darkness of earth, they sat in the light of heaven. A glory shone upon them from the just opening portals, and clothed them as with garments of light. They were sanctified by the breath of the Holy Spirit, and in that sacred hour their love was like that of the angels of God who "neither marry nor are given in marriage." This was but a gracious foretaste, granted by our Father, in his infinite love, of the blissful union of souls in heaven. And as this, our dear brother, walks along his appointed pilgrimage, when he looks back upon more than eleven years of married life, and upon that experience in the dying chamber of his wife, oftenest will his thoughts turn in gratitude and joy — not to the beauty and romance of early love — but to the assurance given in that dying hour, of the presence and love of Christ, and the sanctified union of souls even here.

But friends, I must not protract these remarks. We come here to-day, sorrowing for this, our brother, and yet we come rejoicing; we come with thanksgivings to Him who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, let us lay to heart this lesson, that we may be made better and wiser by it. It is parting here, it is re-union there; it is death on this side the dark river, it is life on the farther side; it is the mourning of bereaved friends here, it is the congratulations of saints in the world on high. And let us all remember that to this same hour we must come; this same conflict we must meet; and the same almighty grace offers itself to us, and the same help will be ours; the same triumph and victory ours, if like her we live lives of humble faith and trust in Christ.

SERMON

PREACHED BY THE PASTOR OF PIEDMONT CHURCH,

April 6th, 1879.

I COR. XV Ch. 57th v. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The smile of God is victory," sings the Quaker poet; and he might have added, all men seek that smile. Strike out from human hopes the prospect of ultimate triumph, and every effort becomes nerveless and dull. The child looks forward to the age of youth; the youth dreams of manhood; and manhood muses upon the splendors of the setting sun. There is always something not yet attained, and the unattained is victory.

The University crowns the hopes of the common school. The future harvest waves in shadowy beauty over the upturning of the ploughman's sod. The merchantman is always painted as coming in with flying colors, rather

than as it sails away. The factories by our rivers hum the music of their owner's hopes. The crowded traffic of anxious men is heralded at every highway crossing, by the piercing scream of haste. Everything means a crowning success. Yet the University diploma is not the end of life. The harvests must be multiplied by the number of the seasons. The freighted ship must sail again. The dizzying mill wheel must know no rest. The empty cars must hurry back for still more freight. The great, pushing, throbbing, restless haste of humanity avows a desired success.

But, with a voice stronger than life, the Scriptures declare the promise. Paradise lost shall be regained. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. The weary shall find rest. Victory shall take the place of defeat. If in this life only we have hope, we are most miserable. These bodies may be ground to powder, or burned to ashes in the fiercest flames; they may become bruised and crushed and disfigured, but the end comes not, at even the funeral. It is written,

"Death is swallowed up in victory;" and facing him who would be king, and looking upon the house he delights to build for us and ours, we can ask in triumph, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Thanks be to God who giveth the victory unto us rather than to you, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, while we thus speak, we know that the most disastrous defeat is met, and the purest victory gained, upon the same field of conflict. The colors of the victors float proudly, while the others are trailed in the dust. There was never a defeat without a conflict; and never a victory without a like conflict. The struggle must come; but what shall be its result? We look forward for success, but we shall know of defeat also.

You plan for some special activities, but sickness keeps you back; it is a temporary defeat, at least. You enter mercantile life; but through some obstacles which are unavoidable, you fail. Such a failure is a defeat. The very commonest affairs and conditions

in life have in them the possibilities of the saddest consequences.

Men build up a great business — their joy; but before the ledgers are footed up their owners are gone; and strangers must look over the accounts and settle them up. So long as the business plans are unfinished, death is a defeat. A father plans for his home and family; labors for its furnishing; but leaves them, in the one startling way, to complete what he had planned,— defeated. A mother plans for her children; shields them from rough treatment of the world; and while she feels their hearts beat nearest hers, she is taken away,— defeated, so far. How many broken hopes there have been! And were these visible to us, as are broken cords or wires, be they silver or gold, the earth would be covered with a waste which all the living could not clear away. "I am disappointed!" How much the expression means. "I am weary of life!" What depths of pathos and sorrow. "It might have been!" You cannot fathom such words. The bright hopes

are wilted; the fruit is decayed; the bud is blasted.

The apostle paints death as a being of venom—not of beauty. He is a serpent with a sting. He gives us to understand that no one can avoid the enemy. There is no other path to immortality than that in which he rests, or in which he lies in wait for the next traveler. There is no passage out of the evils and blessings of this world, save as we pass by him. The sorrow of death is in his sting. Let me know that his sting is gone, and I will fear him not; I will laugh even while he waiteth in the way for me; and I will mock him, and ask, "O death, where is thy sting?"

Looked at from one point of view, the grave seems a victor. There is no friendship so strong. It opens to receive the most loving and the most loved. Kings and princes bow low at its gate, as do their humblest subjects. The jewelled crown is left at its portal. Another takes the vacant

throne. Where one page records the deeds of the great Alexander, a thousand are written of Victoria; thus has the grave covered up the greatness of the former. Companions, desolate and lone, bear the body of one dearer than life itself; and the grave, opening and closing, seems to defeat their hopes — seems to gain a victory. Parents who have made up the little bed a thousand times, go bending low amid blinding tears and allow the sexton to make this bed; and all their possessions seem but a mockery afterwards. Our heavy grief and woe depend for their existence upon one brief word covering a terrible deed. Death without a sting is nothing, and the grave without a victory is nothing. The sting of death is sin. We need enter upon no metaphysical or theological discussion as to the first sin or the last. Enough for us to know that we have come short of the glory of God, and that we have blasted our own hopes; enough to know that some evil word or deed shall confront us at the last day.

I speak to those whose memories reach back over the years. In his "Confessions," De Quincy tells us that often a moment would come, in his terrible experience, holding in its narrow limits the deeds of a lifetime. The power of such a recollection is within each of us; and let but the terrible conditions come, and the sins and woes of life would all become real again. Oh, how many things we have forgotten; and yet, each of these, like those we best remember, is sharper than the sting of the serpent; each, unforgiven, will be the sting of death.

Were death an honor, we might court his coming; we might sing of his advent with joy. We might then almost sport in the foam of that cold sea; but it is the thought of death as the price of sin, which causes our sad forebodings. The sensualist cannot but shrink from the coming hour. The pleasure-seeker is aware of a time to come when gold shall be as dross, and the finest apparel more worthless than sack-cloth. Viewed in its own light, death is to be dreaded because of its terrible sting.

We observe just here, another truth: not every seeming defeat is really such. Victory often depends upon a defeat. The frustration of a plan is not the defeat of the person. It sometimes takes long years of darkness to learn what God has marked out for us to do. Our cherished plans may centre about an inferior work; and if our attempts in that direction are baffled, it may be for the best. The severe sorrow of the young Williston, incident to the failure of his sight, thwarted his entrance into the ministry. His was only a defeat leading him into a far nobler sphere of usefulness, as the liberal benefactor of thousands who, without him, would have been left in obscurity. Victory was wrought out of his very seeming defeat. In a home of rare culture and beauty, a father and mother cherished, with almost idolizing affection, their beautiful boy, an only child. A thousand homes were passed by, while this, in a lonely day, was made childless. Call it, if you will, a bitter sorrow; and so it was,

Yet out of such a defeat has risen that lasting memorial in the form and power of Wellesley College. The sacred modern history of the church refers to the young Harriet Newell, scarce reaching the shore of India in season to die of consumption, which overtook her on the voyage. But twenty years had she lived when the messenger came to take her away. "Glorious intelligence!" were her words of greeting to the announcement of the summons. "Tell mother," she said, "that I am not sorry I have come." But do you say the work of Christ was thus defeated? that her life was wasted? "Mrs. Newell," says Dr. Anderson, "probably accomplished more by what seemed her untimely death, than she could have done by a long life." Thousands sprang up to carry on the great work she had but just begun.

The silk worm, wrapped in the chrysalis, seems void of life and beauty, yet another form, and that, too, of beauty, shall emerge from its silken texture. The chrysalis means

only the death of the old form. We have called death a seeming defeat; and were there no immortal spirit, we might call it thus. Once make sure that the grave holds all the once life, and the grave has won the victory. But reason and scripture deny the fact. Your observation of the dying makes void the supposition. Once know that apart from the grave another immortal has entered into glory, and the seeming defeat is altogether a victory. Once be sure that there is for us a life everlasting, and the dark, narrow gateway is only the triumphal arch of the conquerer.

Rome, the mistress of the world, once sealed with her powerful signet, a grave, in order to make its triumph sure; but the mighty kingdom was put to shame.

In the name of Him whom the grave could not keep, nor death could conquer — the alpha and the omega, the first and the last who died and rose again — we place our hope of victory.

Now, can such a hope be tested? Can

the dying Stephen look through the opening gates before entering into his glory? Can Paul, in vision seraphic, look upon things which it were unlawful for him to declare? Can Payson say, "the celestial city is full in my view?" Can Mrs. Hemans speak, "I feel as if I were sitting with Mary, at the feet of my Redeemer, hearing the music of his voice, and learning of Him to be meek and lowly?" Can Hannah Moore exultingly break the spell of death with that word of truest victory — joy? Shall Lady Huntington, leaving her earthly titles of honor, more triumphantly say, "I shall go to my Father to-night?" Shall John Eliot greet the end of earth with "welcome, joy?" Shall Judson say in his hour of dissolution, "I feel so strong in Christ?" Shall Thomas Scott, restless in death, declare, "This is heaven begun?" Call this world dark — and without Christ it is dark — and when the gate of pearl opens, is it not to be expected that some of the eternal sunlight shall sometimes smite our faces?

It will not be regarded as any intrusion of private grief upon the public, if here, among those who loved her, there shall be matched with the triumphant words of the scriptures, the words and experience of one who ended a pure life in a transition of surpassing beauty. It is only as such an experience reflects the power of the gospel truth that it shall find a place here. Is there a power in the Gospel of Christ leading to a complete triumph? Is there a grace stronger than any staff upon which we may rest? Is there a christian hope which strengthens as the body weakens? Does the Lord Jesus fulfil his promises? Can we take the promise in its fulness, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end?"

I. *The victory of faith.* For a full week the tidings from these several churches, and from these, our meetings of prayer, have reminded us of the incense of fervent hearts ascending to the throne. Were these prayers without avail? God forbid the thought! Seldom has the promise been more fully

accepted, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." It seemed one great outburst of love, that if it were possible, this cup might be spared her. Night and day it was an unceasing cry. "Do you think the people are praying for me?" she asked; and they were praying. "Pray for me," she asked, "that I may be prepared for the Lord's will." We prayed that death might have no victory, and he had none. Bodily health and recovery were denied her, yet, with a hope more triumphant than is given in health, she conquered death. "My Redeemer is my only hope," she repeatedly said, and He failed her not.

Disappointment deepens our sorrow while we recall the hopes strongly built upon her returning health. The disease against which she had contended for years, seemed baffled. She was spared long enough to say that her child had passed through the last sickness incident especially to childhood; and then she passed away with the contagion breathed by his kiss of love. Thus it is that our

Lord often comes in an unlooked for way; yet blessed are they who are ready.

In anticipation of the experience so peculiarly sacred, it may be asked why it is that the like joy is not the heritage of all? The questioning answer is just as pertinent: why is it that our christian experiences in life are not the same? God alone can answer such queries as these.

But, above and over all, her triumph must be known as the heritage of incessant prayer, answered in a consecrated life. It was as truly an answer as if health had flushed upon her face again. It was not my way; it was not your way; and yet in his own way the Lord answered the petitions; and the prayer of faith did save the sick from all the power of death.

II. *The victory in a personal hope.* Coldly, at best, can the pen chronicle the throbbings of victory. Harshly must even the tenderest voice repeat the words inspired in death. Apart from the voice and tone of victory, what shall be said is the power of the Gos-

pel of the Lord Jesus in giving peace and triumph?

Call to mind one sensitive from her girlhood, almost to diffidence; quiet in her every word and deed; timid lest she should even seemingly intrude herself upon the attentions of others! Remember the years of suffering and of sickness which were hers! Unite with these characteristics and conditions a heart sensitive to every expression of friendship, clinging fondly to those who loved her, and knowing no difference between the rich and the poor, recording in her diary, after a call upon one of Christ's aged, dependent disciples, "would that I might pattern after her." Recall a judgment based only upon her convictions to duty; beginning at the age of fourteen years, the distinctively christian life under the faithful instruction of her who is now the wife of President Bliss, of Constantinople. Surround her in her earlier and later homes with a multitude of loving friends, and then ask concerning the power of that Christ-given grace which enabled her to say,

"to die is gain." Tell us, ye who love with a mother's undying affection, what was it that enabled her, again and again, to say, "I can leave my dear child without a fear?" Her own words, even in death, give answer: "You cannot tell how much grace has done for me in this lesson; and I cannot; but I know—I *know* the Savior is mine." Hundreds of voices were asking at the door of her condition, but we were in the glory.

Upon the morning of Tuesday (March 25th), the last day but one of her illness, death seemed to her at hand. The fulness of her triumphant faith had come. Her feet, she said, were in the cold waters; but her theme was of Jesus. It was at this hour she began a conversation, which for richness of diction, splendor of imagery, and beauty of christian love and fervor, I have never heard equalled. After she had thus spoken for some minutes, I took a paper, and as unobserved as possible, took down a few words of the many in her exact language. "Everything," said she, "is so beau-

tiful. I have been in the early morning, and have seen the dear Jesus; and seen Him radiant, radiant. By and by I shall see Him more beautiful." "I have seen the Savior; I have seen the halo encircling his head." "I have gotten ready for what is more beautiful than earth." "My feet are in the dark waters," she said. When I asked her if the river was dark—"O, no; beautiful! The river is washing up to the Sea of Glass. O, it is beautiful, *beautiful* to me." "I am not alone," she continued; "I am not unprepared; I am only too glad; I am not afraid; I would not live if I could; I want to be there. Christ is everything He has promised." It was in this connection she spoke of her Savior, the Beautiful One she had seen during the night: "It would spoil it to tell how He appeared. O, the wonderful, *wonderful*, WONDERFUL glories of heaven." Resting for a moment, she spoke: "I am going to see Fordie. I hope Jesus will assign him to me to be again in my charge." "I love the Lord Jesus as I love my soul, He is my Savior forever and forever."

Thus for an hour, spent in such words as these, emphasized by a tone and look almost unearthly, she entranced us all. "We will hope," she said upon the last evening, "to have some sweet conversation to-night." "I know, I know I am the Lord's," she said. I asked her whether her thoughts were more on the other world or on this, when she quickly replied, "O, the other one; and if you could only see the dear Jesus, and all these beautiful ones, as I do, you would say the same." Already death was come. Do you fear death now? was asked. "O, no; it is beautiful." Would you ever fear it again? "Never, never." Can you say you are glad to die? "O, yes, I am glad. I am sorry to leave you, and mother, and Kirk; but I can trust all of you in His hands now; I wish to go." The watchers heard all this and much more. It seemed a transfiguration. We could not weep, save for ourselves.

It is not for this occasion to repeat her personal words to us. Enough to declare, that without excitement, as always, she calmly

waited the call. The solace of prayer, ever her support, was given her in her fullest consciousness, even to the end. Her last words are the key unlocking the sacredness of her hope, both in life and death. When she had told us "The end has come," she added, "Pray, pray for me now." Upon Tuesday afternoon she had sung with me the first two lines:

> "There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins;"

but her choking voice could sing no more. She sings the greater song of victory now, and strikes her harp to the measure of the heavenly music. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. *The unfailing source of victory.* It is not in ourselves. No mortal arm has ever defeated death. We rest upon Him who has brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel — our unfailing support. If this hope means anything, it means everything. Religion is good in the sunny

day and in the storm. If it were to fail us in one extremity, it were unworthy our trust.

Beloved; in a twelve years' ministry I have witnessed many a sorrow. I have seen strong men bowed with grief and pain. It has been given almost to hear the footsteps of the angels and the rustling of their pure white robes — a reality, but for dullness of hearing and shortness of vision. The gospel theory has been the solace given; yet many a time has the suggestion mentally arisen, that I have not tested the promise. But, friends; the gospel theory discloses a grand fact. The theory does not equal the reality. The gospel hope is stronger than all our preaching; the plank does not even bend beneath our tread. Through Christ, even death shall lose his sting; and the banner of victory shall float on every christian grave.

Human sympathy is very precious, and these great events in sorrow call it forth. Your messages of kindest remembrance —

your tokens of love — your readiness for any action, made very pleasant the last days of her who called you her friends. Many of you have confessed the same Savior; and some of you have not yet owned him Lord; but there is only one name here to-day. In Him we trust. It is He who walks in the valley of shadows; and who leaves us not alone in the swellings of Jordan. Before each of us is that valley shadowed by the Cypress; and the swellings of that river shall lave our feet. But, friends, are you sure of the arm upon which you lean? Have you chosen the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely, as your friend? Without Him the present is desolate and the future is dark. Without Him these desolate, broken homes would be only springs of bitter waters.

The victory does not make us forget the hardships. Jesus wept, even though the stone of the sepulchre should no longer hold death-bound whom he loved. Forgetfulness is not the surcease of sorrow; but by every

desolate hearthstone and in every lonely walk there abides one who can say, "I am the resurrection and the life. . . Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." The cloud may be the very blackness of darkness; but if there be a rainbow girding that cloud, the rainbow is the glory brightening what would otherwise be only blank despair. The apostle knew well its meaning when, having borne the keenest sorrows, he opened up to every believing soul these words of joy: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

[From the Cambridge Tribune, March 28th.]

In Memoriam.

DEATH OF MRS. F. J. MEARS.

On Wednesday last the sad news was conveyed to us of the death, at Worcester, Mass., of Mrs. F. J. Mears, wife of Rev. David O. Mears. Mr. Mears was formerly pastor of North Avenue Congregational Church, but is now the settled pastor over Piedmont Church, Worcester. The death of this most estimable wife, mother, and friend, was sudden, and carries a shock of acute grief to a large circle of friends in Cambridge, where she was so well known and loved. While residing in Cambridge, for many years her health was such that she was unable to leave her home, except to a limited degree, but those who were so fortunate as to visit that home, and receive the welcome there, will never forget her who welcomed them. From her sick chamber she cheered the pastor on in his labor of love, and thus her influence, though not seen to a large extent from her personal contact or presence in parish work, had its effect in a more quiet way, and with it a true blessing.

The deep sympathy of the entire community seems to go out toward the afflicted husband and son in this hour of their deep grief. Words are poor, cold things, at best, to sustain one in such an hour of affliction, and we know they cannot assuage the grief of those who mourn, yet it is blessed to know that we have true friends then, and that there is one friend, above all other friends, who can and will sustain us if we will go to him. May the Lord support and sustain the relatives in this sad affliction.

When e'er the shadow writes its name
It tells of light;
It tells us from the sun it came,
In vesture white;
That joy and grief are way-marks brief,
Wrought by a pencil bright;
That all of life is light and shade,
By Truth's eternal sunlight made,
So when affliction deep doth come,
We hear a whisper,—Harvest! Home!

The funeral services of Mrs. Mears will be held at Worcester, this afternoon.

[From the Worcester Daily Spy, March 27th.]

DEATH OF MRS. D. O. MEARS.

It will be a surprise to many that Mrs. Mears, wife of Rev. D. O. Mears, departed this life yesterday morning. Though her physical condition had been frail and delicate for years, the immediate occasion of her death was an illness of but short duration. Since she removed from Cambridge to this city, her health had become so much better as to encourage the hope of a wider usefulness and a longer life. Though the summons was so sudden, it did not overtake her unprepared to meet it with cheerful resignation and assured hope. She had been accustomed to regard an early death as not improbable, and in the immediate prospect enjoyed unusually bright and happy anticipations of the future, confident that she was going to be with the Savior, whom she supremely loved, and with the child whose early removal she had so tenderly mourned, and whom "she hoped he would now confide to her care." Necessarily her acquaintance here was as yet quite limited. She had not come to know intimately very many of her husband's parish; but even a brief acquaintance served to impress every one with her culture and refinement,

her interest and sympathy, and the more she was known the more she became appreciated and endeared. Her removal will be felt by them as a common affliction, while they will deeply sympathize with their bereaved pastor. Mr. Mears may be assured also of the sympathy of that circle with whom he is so intimately connected by professional affinities. It will be found deeper than mere words of condolence, though it will be of no adequate solace. As he has guided and comforted others, so, it is believed, he will be comforted of Him who "in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, is able also to succor them that are tempted."

After the funeral services here, the remains will be taken to Amherst, the home of her youth, and be buried by the side of those of the child who had "gone before." May the motherless boy who survives be "kept from the evil," and prove in character and usefulness an answer to her prayers.

[From the Worcester Daily Spy, March 29th.]

FUNERAL OF MRS. D. O. MEARS.

The funeral of Mrs. Frances J. Mears, wife of Rev. D. O. Mears, took place at Piedmont Church yesterday afternoon. There was a large attendance, including a delegation of friends from Cambridge, where Mr. Mears began his ministry and was settled for ten years, and several of the pastors of the local churches. The services were very impressive and affecting. The floral offerings on the casket and pulpit were many and elegant, and included a large pillow with the initials, "F. J. M.", an anchor, two crowns, a crescent, star, cross, basket and vase of cut flowers, with a profusion of callas, smilax and potted plants. The pastor's pew was also festooned with smilax and callas, and a stand of flowers. Prayer was offered at the family residence, on Queen Street, by Rev. L. B. Voorhees, and the remains and family reached the church at 1:45. The bearers were Messrs. S. E. Hildreth, E. T. Marble, Lyman Drury and Orange Wheeler. The services began with the choir singing, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," after which Rev. Dr. Gould read selections from the Scriptures. The choir sang the hymn

and chant, "Go to thy rest," and were followed by Rev. Dr. Cutler, who spoke of death and the preparation of those who die in the Lord. He said that it is especially sad for the young to die; hopes, expectations and the deepest affection center in the young. When the aged die it is not so sad; it is expected; their work is done and the limit is reached. Rest is needed, and the Lord has promised that rest. The grace needed for preparation to meet the Savior has been granted, and as the end draws near, the hour and the minute of departure is wished and longed for. The assurance of those who have faith in the Lord, and the visions of the hereafter at the last moments were referred to, and fitting allusion made to the departure of the deceased. He said the affliction of the loved pastor is also the affliction of the church, of which he is the shepherd, and of the public. The influence of the deceased on the material as well as the spiritual prosperity of the church was pronounced, and a blight is spread on its folds. The lesson of the hour is for all to be prepared to meet the Master. The friend we mourn has preceded us only a few days, and it is for us to improve our opportunities for the final meeting.

Rev. Dr. Cady, of Westboro', spoke tenderly of the personal character of the deceased, and of the relations she bore as a pastor's wife and assistant. From the hour of her husband's ordination as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the hour of her death, she

was consecrated to the cause of the Lord. The silent power of her christian life was great indeed, and will long be felt. Her work at home as a mother was beautiful in the extreme; her influence was, and will be of God. The grace of God always rested on her soul, and she passed over the river of death confiding herself to the care of the Lord, who never fails those who trust in Him. The parting of the wife with the husband and son was depicted in the tenderest language, bringing tears to nearly every eye in the house.

Prayer was offered by Rev. George W. Phillips, the choir sang the hymn, "Still one in life and one in death," and the services closed with the benediction, pronounced by Rev. Dr. Gould. The remains were taken to Amherst on the 4:30 express train, and will be buried from the church in that town this afternoon.